

# International Cooperation in Cancer Control:

*Overcoming Challenges Through  
Leadership and Training*



IRELAND-NORTHERN  
IRELAND-NCI  
CANCER CONSORTIUM



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# 2010 Accomplishments

This list provides an overview of some 2010 notable achievements and activities spearheaded by the All-Ireland National Cancer Institute (NCI) Cancer Consortium. For more information on these selected 2010 accomplishments and who was involved, please refer to the Consortium in Action and Scholar Exchange and Training Up Close sections of this Annual Activities Report.

- Added Northern Ireland as a partner in the NCI/HRB Health Economics Fellowship (HEF) and selected the first HEF fellow from Northern Ireland
- Organised and implemented the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Ireland-Northern Ireland-NCI Health Economics Fellowship Conference* through a joint collaboration among the NCI, Health Research Board (HRB), and Health and Social Care Research and Development Division (HSC R&D)—attracting nearly 50 academic researchers, students, clinicians, and government officials
- Developed and launched the Cancer Clinical Trials Leadership and Management Program in collaboration with partners at the NCI Intramural Program and the Consortium Nursing Working Group. Five nurse managers from Ireland and Northern Ireland were selected to participate in the 2010 inaugural class
- Funded the participation of two nurses in the NCI Clinical Trials Training for Nurses programme
- Continued to fund the Joint Research Projects in Cancer in Ireland and Northern Ireland
- Funded 16 All-Ireland participants in the NCI Summer Curriculum in Cancer Prevention
- Conducted four trans-Atlantic teleconference seminars on nursing and patient care
- Completed the installation of multimedia medical imaging workstations using TELESYNGERY® Lite at Limerick Regional Hospital (Limerick) and St. Vincent's University Hospital (Dublin)
- Accrued more than 1,100 patients to All-Ireland Cooperative Oncology Research Group studies
- Contributed to the 2010 *Irish Association for Cancer Research (IACR) Annual Conference* held in Galway
- Launched the 2009 Annual Activities Report at the North-South Ministerial Council Meeting





**A MESSAGE FROM THE**

# *Directors*



## Overcoming Challenges Through Leadership and Training

We are pleased to present the Board of Directors' 2010 Annual Activities Report for the All-Ireland National Cancer Institute (NCI) Cancer Consortium. This year's report highlights the 2010 accomplishments of Consortium programmes, leadership, and scholars—all of which have contributed to advancing our mission of lessening the burden of cancer across the island of Ireland through cross-border collaborations in cancer research and education. Despite daunting economic challenges, the Consortium has remained a leading example of international collaboration.

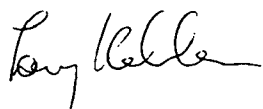
In 2010, perhaps more than any other year of the Consortium's history, health economics has been an important area of focus. Through our Health Economics Fellowship (HEF) programme, scholars from the island of Ireland are trained by international experts in the field and are encouraged to pursue careers in health economics on the island of Ireland.

In November, the Health Economics Fellows and other experts from Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United States participated in the Ireland-Northern Ireland-NCI Health Economics Fellowship Conference entitled *The Value of Health Economics for Future Cancer Services*. This conference focused on the important role that health economics will continue to play in cancer control and services, especially during turbulent economic times. Details about both the HEF and the HEF Conference are included in this report.

Through the support of our governments and collaborative spirit of our colleagues, we have made impressive progress in training the next generation of cancer researchers on the island of Ireland. None of our programmes, training endeavours, or meetings would have been possible without the hard work, cooperation, and coordination of our partners, working groups, and Strategic Advisory Group. We would also like to thank Ms. Isabel Otero for her contributions as the Consortium Program Director and work in developing this report.

As we continue to foster collaboration across Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United States, we hope that the Consortium continues to be a leader in international cancer research and training and ultimately contributes to improved cancer care on the island of Ireland.

Sincerely,



**Dr. Tony Holohan**  
Chief Medical Officer  
Department of Health  
and Children  
Ireland



**Dr. Michael McBride**  
Chief Medical Officer  
Department of Health, Social  
Services and Public Safety  
Northern Ireland



**Dr. Harold Varmus**  
Director  
National Cancer Institute  
United States



## State of Cancer Services on the Island of Ireland

In 2008 (the most recent year for which data are available), more than 28,000 individuals were diagnosed with some form of cancer on the island of Ireland.<sup>1</sup> According to the third *All-Ireland Cancer Statistics Report*, the most common forms were breast, colorectal, prostate and lung cancer. The total incidence rates were 10% lower for men and 2.2% lower for women in Northern Ireland compared with the Republic of Ireland. Mortality rates were also 4% lower in Northern Ireland.

Although cancer diagnosis has been on the rise due to population growth and aging, mortality has improved for breast, colorectal and prostate cancer and survival rates did not fall for any form of cancer. As a result, survival rates have increased between 1994 and 2004. Improvements in survival are the result of increased screening and better multidisciplinary care. To learn more about the impact of cancer on the island, please download the *Third All-Ireland Cancer Statistics Report* at <http://www.allirelandnci.com/pdf/publications/Stat-Report-1994-2004/allireland1994-2004.pdf>.

### IRELAND

The National Cancer Registry of Ireland recorded an annual average of 29,238 new cases of cancer from 2007-2009 (preliminary figures), of which 24,520 were invasive cancers including non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC). The most common invasive cancers overall (apart from NMSC) were prostate (2,684 cases), female breast (2,571 cases), colorectal (2,250 cases), and lung cancer (1,904 cases).

Apart from NMSC, breast cancer was the most common diagnosis in women and prostate cancer the most common in men, followed by colorectal and lung cancers for both sexes. An estimated 8,000 people died from cancer in 2007, the most recent year for which figures are available. Lung

cancer was the most frequent cause of cancer death overall in Ireland.

According to figures from the Registry, national estimates for three successive diagnosis periods (1994-1997, 1998-2001, and 2002-2006) show clear evidence of ongoing improvements in survival for most cancers. The estimated five-year survival rate for female breast cancer is continuing to rise and is now more than 80%.

### 2010 Accomplishments

- **Reorganisation of cancer services:** Following the successful reorganisation of breast cancer services in 2009, the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) is focused on restructuring services for pancreatic,

rectal, and ocular cancer as well as lung and prostate surgery.

- **Community Oncology Programme:** This NCCP programme continued its work on educating health professionals in the community to increase capacity, promote best practise in cancer control, and focus on cancer prevention and the appropriate and timely referral of suspected cancer cases.
- **Hereditary Risk and Screening:** NCCP submitted two reports on how to expand current screening services to reach those with a hereditary risk of colorectal or breast cancer. Recommendations from these reports will begin to be implemented as part of the national screening programme over the next two years.

<sup>1</sup> Northern Ireland Cancer Registry - <http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/nicr/Data/OnlineStatistics/> and GLOBOCAN 2008 - <http://globocan.iarc.fr/factsheets/populations/factsheet.asp?uno=372>





- **Breast screening:** In 2010, Breast-Check continued to screen women aged 50 to 64 throughout the country, free of charge.
- **Cervical screening and prevention:** In its second year of screening (August 2009-2010), CervicalCheck provided 304,032 smear tests to 279,769 women aged 25-60. A free human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme also commenced in 2010 for girls entering their first year of secondary school (aged 12-13).
- **Colorectal cancer screening:** Work began in 2010 on the introduction of a national colorectal screening programme in 2012. The preparatory phase will focus on building up staffing and infrastructure for the programme, which will initially screen men and women aged 60-69.
- **National Plan for Radiation Oncology:** Construction of new radiation oncology facilities at two Dublin hospitals was completed in 2010, significantly increasing radiation oncology capacity in the region.
- **Rapid Access Diagnostic Clinics:** Additional clinics for lung and prostate cancer opened in 2010. Five cancer centres now have prostate clinics while six centres have lung clinics.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

In Northern Ireland, there are approximately 9,800 new cases of cancer diagnosed and approximately 3,800 deaths from cancer each year—making cancer the second most common cause of death after diseases of the circulatory system. Five-year survival rates for common cancers currently stand at 81.4% for breast cancer; 8.0% and 9.6% for lung cancer in males and females, respectively; 50.7% and 54.6% for colorectal cancer in males and females, respectively; and 76.9% for prostate cancer.

Cancer care is provided to the 1.7 million people living in Northern Ireland through five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts and specialist radiotherapy services are currently provided by the Northern Ireland Clinical Cancer Centre (NICC), which is located in the Belfast HSC Trust.

In addition to the specialist cancer care provided in the NICC and at the four cancer units in the other Trusts, community support and care are provided across Northern Ireland. Additional investments for cancer services and developments are planned, including adding consultant medical staff, improving access to radiotherapy, and introducing cervical and prostate cancer brachytherapy.

## 2010 Accomplishments

- **Bowel Cancer Screening Programme:** The roll out of the Northern Ireland Bowel Cancer Screening Programme commenced in April 2010 and screening is being offered every two years to men and women aged 60-69.
- **Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Programme:** In September 2008, human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine was introduced through a school-based programme for 12-13 year old girls, to protect them against future risk of cervical cancer. Vaccine was offered to approximately 12,000 girls with an uptake rate of 89% for the first dose, with 85% and 83% receiving the second and third doses, respectively. In September 2009, in addition to the rolling programme for this age group, a catch-up programme was implemented to offer the vaccine to approximately 48,000 girls born between 2 July 1991 and 1 July 1995 (ages 14 to 18, at the time). HPV vaccine protects against two types of the virus that together cause most (more than 70%) cases of cervical cancer. Between 30 and 40 women in Northern Ireland die each year from cervical cancer.

# Leadership in International Cooperation and Health Economics

*"Tabhair aghaidh ar an ngrian, ach tabhair do dhroim leis an stoirm. (Face the sun, but turn your back to the storm.)"*

*Irish Proverb*

The global financial and economic crisis that began in 2007 has left very few nations unscathed. The island of Ireland is no exception, with economies in both Ireland and Northern Ireland suffering as a result of this devastating situation. In the face of this challenging economic climate, however, cancer research and services are still advancing, and the need and willingness to engage in transatlantic collaboration continues to grow.

Science and innovation have remained priorities for Ireland and Northern Ireland and the healthcare and information technology sectors continue to grow fast within their economies. It is

expected that recent investments to bolster the economy will help sustain scientific research, including cancer research, as a government priority across the island of Ireland.

International collaboration continues to be a ray of sunshine amidst this turbulent economic storm, and the partnerships and knowledge sharing supported by the All-Ireland NCI Cancer Consortium (AICC) will continue to aid researchers and clinicians in pooling resources, sharing best practices, and fundamentally improving the state of cancer research on the island of Ireland.

In 2010, health economics became an area of increased focus for AICC.

Health economics looks at the issues related to the allocation of healthcare services and resources—including those related to cancer—and identifies ways to improve disease prevention and management in a cost-effective way.

Through the Consortium's Health Economics Fellowship programme, the next generation of scholars is being trained at NCI-funded sites and on the island of Ireland in efficiently and effectively reducing the cancer burden, while considering socio-economic factors that may influence behaviour such as screening uptake and access to treatment. See page 16 to learn more about this programme.

## 2010 Highlight > Enabling Improvement of Cancer Services Through Health Economics

*"This conference is not just about transcending geographical boundaries, it is also about breaking down the barriers that define the ways in which we work. Through collaboration in health economics, we can enable sound decision-making—thereby speeding the pace by which innovations and best practices can be embedded in our cancer services."*

*Dr. Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer  
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety*



**Dr. Michael McBride** (DHSSS) with the current Health Economics Fellows in Belfast.

On 19 November, nearly 50 participants from Ireland, Northern Ireland, other members of the European Union, and the United States convened at the Grosvenor House Conference & Training Centre in Belfast for the *Ireland-Northern Ireland-NCI Health Economics Fellowship Conference: The Value of Health Economics for Future Cancer Services*. The conference was attended by leaders in government, academia, public health, and cancer research and featured diverse presentations on topics including data resources and cancer registries, cancer screening, and human behaviour simulation models.

In addition, discussions about international collaboration as a way to leverage and improve health economics research played a prominent role in the conference. Dr. Joe Harford (Director of the Office of International Affairs (OIA)) and Ms. Isabel V. Otero (International Program Director at OIA) represented the NCI at the conference. Dr. Martin Brown (Chief of NCI's Health Services and Economics Branch of the Applied Research Program) presented on data resources for health economics research.

The AICC Health Economics Fellows had the opportunity to present their research and answer questions from the audience.





# *The Consortium In Action*

*The All-Ireland NCI Cancer Consortium focuses on several key scientific areas to carry out its mandate of increasing scientific and public health collaborations among Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United States and reducing the cancer burden on the island of Ireland. Following are highlights of the activities and achievements of each of its six working groups.*

## **CANCER REGISTRIES AND EPIDEMIOLOGY WORKING GROUP**

The Cancer Registries and Epidemiology Working Group brings together epidemiologists from the population-based cancer registry programmes of Ireland and Northern Ireland with their counterparts at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), including those in the Surveillance Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) Program.

The working group focuses on exploring new avenues of cooperation between the registries, fostering population-based cancer research on the island of Ireland, developing joint research activities, and increasing awareness of the cancer registries and their achievements.

It also seeks to further the education of cancer epidemiologists on the island of Ireland by developing and supporting

joint programmes that help researchers understand more about cancer rates, trends, and outcomes.

*“The all-Ireland atlas of cancer will provide, for the first time, a detailed description of the geographical distribution of cancer risk on the island of Ireland, and should identify new targets for preventive activity.”*

*Dr. Harry Comber*



**Dr. Harry Comber**  
2010 Chair of the Consortium's Cancer Registries and Epidemiology Working Group

## **2010 Highlight > All-Ireland Cancer Atlas: A South-North Collaboration**

The National Cancer Registry of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry are working together with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for Northern Ireland, and the Department of Health and Children of Ireland to produce the first all-Ireland atlas of cancer by combining statistics and risk factor data on the 15 most common cancers. This resource will provide a comprehensive overview of cancer incidence at a level of fine geographic detail and will shed light on what links may exist between geographical variation in cancer rates and known risk factors on the island of Ireland. This collaboration between the cancer registries builds upon the all-Ireland cancer reports that have been supported by the Consortium. Publication of the atlas is expected in 2011.



### *2010 Highlight > Conference Draws Researchers from Across the Island of Ireland*

On 20 October 2010, the *2<sup>nd</sup> National Conference on Population-Based Cancer Research in Ireland* brought together more than 140 cancer prevention researchers, epidemiologists, nurses, and public health specialists from Ireland and Northern Ireland. The meeting, held in Dublin, covered a range of themes including causes of cancer, prevention and early detection, survivorship, palliative care, outcomes research, health services research, and cancer registration. Dr. Harry Comber helped coordinate the event, which was hosted by the National Cancer Registry of Ireland, the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry, and Queen's University Belfast.

### **CLINICAL TRIALS WORKING GROUP**

A primary goal of the Consortium is to increase the scientific understanding of cancers and cancer therapies as well as improve patient access to new, lifesaving therapies. To help achieve this, the Consortium's Clinical Trials Working Group collaborates with hospitals and academic institutions to expand clinical trials programmes on the island of Ireland.

Specifically, the group works to strengthen the capacity of cancer

centres on the island to conduct cancer clinical trials, improve patient access to new therapies, facilitate the expansion of clinical trials programmes and infrastructure, encourage collaboration to create a sufficiently large clinical trials participant pool, and collaborate with the U.S. National Cancer Institute to facilitate the training of oncology nurses in the area of clinical trials management and patient care.



**Dr. Anne Cody**  
2010 Chair of the Consortium's Clinical Trials Working Group

### *2010 Highlight > Clinical Trials Infrastructure Enables Research on the Island of Ireland*

Since 2001, the Consortium has supported hospitals in Ireland and Northern Ireland to develop a clinical trials programme infrastructure called the All-Ireland Cooperative Oncology Research Group (ICORG). ICORG is funded by a grant from the Health Research Board and the Health and Social Care Research and Development Division, with support from the Irish Cancer Society.

In 2010, the ICORG clinical trials network continued to increase participation of patients and clinicians to cancer clinical trials on the island of Ireland, recruiting more than 1,100 patients from Ireland and Northern Ireland. As part of the clinical trial recruitment efforts, ICORG also participated in the NCI-sponsored TailorX study, which is investigating which subgroup of women with early stage breast cancer will benefit from chemotherapy.

In addition to those patients recruited to clinical trials this year, ICORG manages and monitors patients recruited in 2009 and more than 2,500 patients in active follow-up. In total, ICORG is responsible for approximately 4,000 patients participating in cancer clinical trials.

ICORG's membership has grown to 404 members across disease specialties, an increase of 29 members since 2009. Of the 404 members, 22 are located at Belfast City Hospital. A Group Central Office, located in Dublin, and the Statistics & Data Management Office, located in Belfast, provide regulation, study design, and management support to the hospitals.



## 2010 Highlight > Talented Scientists, Robust Biobanking Facility Draw Neuroblastoma Researcher to Ireland

*"There is an enormous pool of talented young scientists in Ireland."*

*Professor Raymond Stallings*



**Professor Raymond Louis Stallings**  
Chair of Cancer Genetics for the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)

For the third consecutive year, Professor Raymond Louis Stallings, chair of cancer genetics for the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), has served as the principal investigator for a Research Project Grant (R01) awarded to the RCSI in February 2010 by the U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI). Professor Stallings, on behalf of RCSI, is the only scientist from Ireland and one of a small pool of foreign scientists receiving direct funding from the NCI through R01 grants.

"The focus at RCSI on translational research and the development of high-resolution imaging platforms through the National Biophotonics facility made this institution very attractive," said Dr. Stallings who, after working in the United States, was initially drawn back to Ireland for its robust biobanking facility at the National Referral Centre for Paediatric Oncology in Ireland. Read the interview with Professor Stallings and learn about his *miRNA Expression in Neuroblastoma* research at [www.allirelandnci.org](http://www.allirelandnci.org).

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WORKING GROUP

The Consortium's Information Technology Working Group (ITWG) is tasked with exploring and providing the tools and resources needed to strengthen the cancer informatics infrastructure on the island of Ireland. More specifically, this working group supports the building of new technological capabilities that impact how clinical research is conducted, researchers are trained, data is managed, and care is delivered.

Since 2000, the ITWG has driven the deployment of TELESYNERGY®, a multimedia medical imaging workstation that makes joint consultations, advanced training, and participation in off-site research possible through the use of cameras, microscopes, audio equipment, and peripheral devices. The network now has five TELESYNERGY® and four TELESYNERGY® Lite locations in Ireland. In addition, Belfast City Hospital in Northern Ireland has technical capabilities to participate in TELESYNERGY® events.



**Professor Donal Hollywood**  
2010 Chair of the Consortium's Information Technology Working Group

## 2010 Highlight > The TELESYNERGY® Network Welcomes New Members

The island-wide network of multimedia medical imaging workstations, called TELESYNERGY®, expanded in 2010 with the installation of TELESYNERGY® Lite stations (installations without radiation therapy functionality) at St. Vincent's University Hospital (Dublin) and Limerick Regional Hospital (Limerick).

Used both nationally and internationally, the AICC has supported the installation of five state-of-the-art TELESYNERGY® workstations across the island of Ireland with the help of the Center for Information Technology (CIT) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). TELESYNERGY® Lite stations have also been installed in four regional hospitals.

### TELESYNERGY® Locations

1. Cork University Hospital
2. Saint Luke's Hospital (Dublin)
3. St. James's Hospital Campus (Dublin)
4. University College Hospital (Galway)
5. Beaumont Hospital (Dublin)
6. Belfast City Hospital

### TELESYNERGY® Lite Locations

1. Letterkenny General Hospital
2. Waterford Regional Hospital
3. St. Vincent's University Hospital (Dublin)
4. Limerick Regional Hospital



## NURSING WORKING GROUP

The Consortium established the Nursing Working Group (NWG) to address the shortage of oncology-trained nurses on the island of Ireland. This working group focuses on expanding educational opportunities for nurses in Ireland and Northern Ireland and promoting nursing and palliative care activities on the island of Ireland. The NWG represents the Consortium in numerous events—including international conferences, workshops, and meetings—and includes oncology nurses, clinicians, educators, researchers, and managers.

Nurses are eligible to participate in several key consortium-sponsored initiatives including: National Cancer Institute (NCI) Clinical Training for Nurses, Cancer Clinical Trials Leadership and Management Program, Clinical Trials E-Learning Module for Nurses, NCI Summer Curriculum in Cancer Prevention, and teleconference seminars. More information on these programmes is available on pages 14-15 and 18.

The chief nursing officers of Ireland and Northern Ireland (Sheila O'Malley and Martin Bradley respectively) participate as members of the AICC Strategic Advisory Group. Mr. Martin Bradley served as the chair in 2010.



**Mr. Martin Bradley**  
2010 Chair of the Consortium's Nursing Working Group

## 2010 Highlight > Teleconference Events Provide Transatlantic Training for Nurses

Since May 2008, the Consortium's Nursing Working Group has organised nine nursing seminars for nurses in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United States. These quarterly events use teleconference technology—and on occasion TELESYNERGY®—to encourage communication, education, and collaboration among cancer nurses on the island of Ireland and in the United States. Coordination of these events is provided by Ms. Ruth Boyd (Belfast City Hospital), Ms. Frieda Clinton (Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin), and Ms. Georgie Cusack (U.S. National Institutes of Health Clinical Research Center). An estimated 90 nurses from the island of Ireland have participated in this programme since its inception.

"The participation of nurses from different countries allows me to be involved in international nursing," said Ms. Naomi Hill, a participant from Belfast City Hospital. "The same problems and difficulties are apparent in all hospitals, so it's natural for nurses to support and advise each other."

The chart below outlines the 2010 All-Ireland Nursing Seminars. Four events are planned for 2011.



**Table 1: 2010 All-Ireland Nursing Seminars**

Date	Topic	Speakers	Participants
<b>26 April</b>	Thromboembolic complications of central venous lines	<b>Leo Brandao, M.D.</b> <i>The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Craigavon Hospital (<i>Portadown</i>)</li> <li>• Mercy Hospital (<i>Cork</i>)</li> <li>• National Institutes of Health (<i>Bethesda, MD</i>)</li> <li>• Regional Cancer Centre (<i>Belfast</i>)</li> <li>• The Hospital for Sick Children (<i>Toronto, Canada</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>14 June</b>	Survivorship issues such as quality of life diaries in clinical settings, needs assessments, and promoting the health and well-being of cancer survivors	<b>Moyra Mills, Ph.D.</b> and <b>Olinda Santin, B.Sc., Ph.D.</b> <i>Queen's University Belfast</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midwest Regional (<i>Limerick</i>)</li> <li>• National Institutes of Health (<i>Bethesda, MD</i>)</li> <li>• Our Lady Children's Hospital Crumlin (<i>Dublin</i>)</li> <li>• Regional Cancer Centre (<i>Belfast</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>13 September</b>	Validating the domain of practise for clinical research nursing	<b>Georgie Cusack, RN, M.S., AOCN</b> <i>Clinical Center, National Institutes of Health</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beaumont Hospital (<i>Dublin</i>)</li> <li>• Craigavon Hospital (<i>Portadown</i>)</li> <li>• National Institutes of Health (<i>Bethesda, MD</i>)</li> <li>• Our Lady Children's Hospital Crumlin (<i>Dublin</i>)</li> <li>• Regional Cancer Centre (<i>Belfast</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>13 December</b>	Impact of healthcare reform on the island of Ireland	<b>Sheila O'Malley</b> and <b>Mary Jackson</b> <i>Department of Health and Children</i>  <b>Sally Campalani</b> Senior Nurse <i>Cancer Services, Belfast</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Craigavon Hospital (<i>Portadown</i>)</li> <li>• Our Lady Children's Hospital Crumlin (<i>Dublin</i>)</li> <li>• Regional Cancer Centre (<i>Belfast</i>)</li> <li>• St. Luke's Hospital (<i>Dublin</i>)</li> <li>• University College Hospital (<i>Galway</i>)</li> </ul>

## PREVENTION WORKING GROUP

One key Consortium goal is to develop and support public health issues from a researcher perspective. The Prevention Working Group (PWG) supports this objective by promoting cancer prevention-related education, training, and research programmes on the island of Ireland and at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in the United States.

Since 2001, the NCI has trained 270 fellows from the island of Ireland in cancer prevention through the NCI Summer Curriculum in Cancer Prevention—with 16 participants in these courses in 2010. Seven scientists have also participated in the NCI Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program; a five-year program that includes mentored research in the NCI in Bethesda,

Maryland. Participants are encouraged to return to the island of Ireland to pursue careers in cancer prevention and control upon completion of the Program. (See Consortium scholars section on page 19 for more details.)



**Dr. Fenton Howell**  
2010 Chair of the Consortium's Prevention Working Group

In addition to the scholars programmes, the PWG organises meetings for healthcare professionals, researchers, and the public to learn about updates in cancer prevention, research, and care.

*"Ireland is a relatively small country; hence the benefits of international experience are crucial in implementing developments in any aspect of cancer control."*

*Dr. Fenton Howell*

## SCHOLAR EXCHANGE AND TRAINING WORKING GROUP

The Scholar Exchange and Training Working Group addresses the need to develop cancer researchers on the island of Ireland. Consortium-endorsed fellowships and basic and advanced training provide scientists with the opportunity to tap into the cancer research programmes of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United States.

Consortium scholars have diverse research interests, demonstrate commitment to reducing the burden from cancer, and have published nearly 60 peer-reviewed articles in publications such as the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, *The Lancet*, and the *Irish Journal of Medical Science*. Overall, more than 350 participants have been selected to participate in the scholar exchange

and training programmes since the Consortium's inception.

In 2010, the Consortium facilitated the training of 52 scholars across eight programs. Notably, The Health and Social Care Research and Development (HSC R&D) Division of the Public Health Agency of Northern Ireland joined the Health Research Board (HRB) of Ireland and the U.S. National Cancer Institute in funding the Health Economics Fellowship.

### 2010 Highlight > Prof. Mark Lawler: A Valued AICC Leader

Since 2002, Prof. Mark Lawler has served as a member of the Consortium Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) and the Chair of the Scholar Exchange and Training Working Group (2008-2010). He has made many contributions as an SAG member, including a dedicated commitment to engaging AICC with the Irish Association for Cancer Research. His efforts have helped the Consortium advance its mission to lessen the burden of cancer across the island of Ireland through transatlantic collaborations in cancer research and education.

In 2010, Prof. Lawler stepped down as Chair of the Scholar Exchange and Training Working Group. The Consortium applauds Prof. Lawler's dedication to stimulating the growth of critical Consortium programs, and to identifying new ways to increase training for postgraduate researchers. An example is the Joint Research Projects in Cancer (JRPC)—formerly known as the Joint Research Fellowships in Cancer—which he helped to develop and promote. The JRPC has become a valuable resource for rising young investigators looking to work with renowned and established scientists on the island of Ireland and in the United States on a research project of mutual interest. As a result of his hard work, the Scholar Exchange and Training Working Group can move forward, drawing upon the collaborative spirit he helped cultivate.



**Professor Mark Lawler**  
2010 Chair of the Consortium's Scholar Exchange and Training Working Group

### 2010 Highlight > Consortium Participates in 2010 IACR Annual Conference

The 2010 *Irish Association for Cancer Research (IACR) Annual Conference* took place in Galway on 3-5 March 2010 attracting more than 350 delegates from across the island of Ireland. This conference offered the opportunity for attendees to hear national and international speakers discuss topics such as drug discovery in academia, biomarkers for cancer diagnosis and targeted therapy, tumour metastasis and signalling factors that regulate cell death, and the pinpointing of cancer risk with genomics and epidemiology.

The Irish Cancer Society Lecture was introduced by Prof. Mark Lawler, President of IACR and Chair of the Consortium's Scholar Exchange Working Group, chaired by Mr. John McCormack, CEO, Irish Cancer Society, and delivered by Dr. Mark Pegram, Professor of Surgery, Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, University of Miami. Dr. Stephen J. Chanock, Chief of the Laboratory of Translational Genomics at the National Cancer Institute, presented on the power of discovery and genome wide association studies in cancer to uncover the complex development and biology of cancer.

The IACR Annual Meeting also provides an excellent opportunity for Consortium-supported doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows to present their work, either in oral or poster presentations. As one of the Young Scientists Presentations, Brid Ryan, Ph.D., M.P.H. (NCI Cancer Prevention Fellow, 2006-2009), presented "Lung cancer cells asymmetrically divide their template DNA strands during cell division."

To view the event programme and for information on the 2011 conference, visit: <http://www.ia-cr.ie/conferences.html>.



**Table 2: Number of Scholars Supported by the Consortium (2000-2010)**

Type of Exchange Programme	Duration of Programme	Ireland	Northern Ireland	United States	Total Participants
Cancer Clinical Trials Leadership and Management Program *	1 week	4	1		5
NCI Clinical Trials Training for Nurses	3 weeks/3 months	11	9		20
Clinical Trials E-Learning Module for Nurses	12 weeks	24	22		46
Health Economics Fellowships in Cancer Program	4 years	5	1		6
Joint Research Projects in Cancer †	2-3 years	8 †	8	5	21
NCI Summer Curriculum in Cancer Prevention: Molecular Prevention Course	1 week	117	40		157 ‡
NCI Summer Curriculum in Cancer Prevention: Principles and Practice of Cancer Prevention and Control Course	4 weeks	79	36		115 ‡
NCI Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program	4 years	3	4		7
Epidemiology Fellowship	3 years	2	1	1	4
* New programme in 2010 † The total number of participants includes fellows who completed the course as a requirement for the NCI CPFP, JRPC, and HRB/NCI Health Economics Fellowships in Cancer (2000-2009). ‡ Formerly known as the Joint Research Fellowships in Cancer.					

## 2010 Highlight > All-Ireland Institute for Hospice and Palliative Care

*"AICC has provided that essential link between palliative care and cancer care in terms of research education and policy. Its work continues to shape the transitional care planning needed to ensure that patients and families receive seamless, high quality services delivered to them at times of greatest need."*

*Philip Larkin, Professor of Clinical Nursing  
School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems & Our Lady's Hospice Ltd*

The Consortium is involved in many activities to improve palliative care—a specialised form of care typically provided by a multidisciplinary team of palliative care doctors, nurses, and social workers who focus on alleviating the pain, symptoms, and stress of serious illnesses such as cancer.

In 2010, the All-Ireland Institute for Hospice and Palliative Care began its work to drive expanded education, research, policy, and service development in palliative care. The institute is hosted by Our Lady's Hospice and Care Services, Dublin and is comprised of 12 partners from Ireland and Northern Ireland, including academic medical centres, hospices, and clinical service providers.

Funding is provided by Atlantic Philanthropies, The Health Research Board of Ireland, and the Research and Development Office of Northern Ireland, as well as other agencies involved in palliative care. The inaugural meeting took place on 6 October 2010, in the Education and Research Centre at Our Lady's Hospice and Care Services and all 12 partners were represented at this meeting.

In November 2010, Dr. Joe Harford and Ms. Isabel V. Otero visited the Northern Ireland Hospice in Belfast to discuss palliative care activities in Northern Ireland and the United States. Dr. Harford and Ms. Otero met with the hospice's chief executive officer and consultants, including Dr. Max Watson, Lecturer in Palliative Care at the University of Ulster.



# Scholar Exchange and Training Up Close

*The Consortium recognises the importance of building a workforce that has the skills and knowledge necessary to implement cancer control and thus sponsors a number of fellowships and training opportunities for scientists, physicians, and other public health professionals from Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United States. Since 2001, more than 350 individuals have participated in AICC's scholar programmes.*

## CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

*"The Cancer Clinical Trials Leadership and Management Program was an extremely positive experience for us. We gained so much insight into how clinical research is managed in and out of the NIH and have new information and tools to bring back to our Irish workplace."*

Mary Grace Kelly  
Oncology Research Nurse  
Letterkenny General Hospital, and  
2010 Cancer Clinical Trials Leadership  
and Management scholar

In 2010, the Consortium launched the Cancer Clinical Trials Leadership and Management Programme, a one week training programme for cancer clinical trials nurse managers from the island of Ireland. Participants spent three days at the National Cancer Institute and had the opportunity to tour the NIH Clinical Center, review continuing education curriculums, and meet with representatives from NCI's Center for Cancer Research, Office of Communications and Education, and

Division of Cancer Prevention. Areas of focus included quality control and internal audit procedures, trial staffing and protocol adherence, and Clinical Research Nursing career paths.

In addition to training at NCI, the nurse managers spent one day at the Georgetown University Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center,

meeting with research unit managers and nurse managers from Georgetown's Clinical Research Unit and Lombardi Cancer Center.

Participants in the first cohort of this programme were: Jo Ballot (Dublin), Eileen Dillon (Belfast), Derval Kehily (Dublin), Mary Grace Kelly (Donegal), and Veronica McInerney (Galway).

## 2010 Highlight > International Cooperation Among Clinical Research Nurses

*"The IACRN conference was beneficial in that we, a group of research nurses, connected with our colleagues in the U.S. and will now work together to pave the way forward in Ireland to highlight the necessity of the 'research nurse' as a recognised role in clinical research and in nursing in Ireland."*

Veronica McInerney, Clinical Nurse Manager, HRB Clinical Research Facility, National University of Ireland Galway, and 2010 Cancer Clinical Trials Leadership and Management scholar

Following the 2010 Cancer Clinical Trials Leadership and Management Program activities, the participants had the opportunity to attend the Second Annual International Association of Clinical Research Nurses (IACRN) Conference—*The Road Ahead: Establishing the Specialty of Clinical Research Nursing*—from 17-19 November in Bethesda, Maryland, USA. The conference focused on ways to establish clinical research nursing as a key component of clinical trials. Presentations covered topics such as ethics, protecting vulnerable populations in clinical research, comparative effectiveness research, electronic medical record adoption, and nurse education.



**Left Image:**

NCI NWG members Ms. Elizabeth Ness, Ms. Diane St Germaine, and Ms. Georgie Cusack with the inaugural class of the Cancer Clinical Trials Leadership and Management Program at NCI in Bethesda, MD.

## NCI CLINICAL TRIALS TRAINING FOR NURSES

*"The programme broadened my vision for where I could develop opportunities for nurse-led trials. It also gave me time out from my normal workplace to observe and learn from other trials practitioners at the National Cancer Institute and to share our experiences."*

Barbara Harvey  
2010 CTT Scholar

The Consortium's Nursing Working Group plans and coordinates the National Cancer Institute (NCI) Clinical Trials Training (CTT) programme for cancer nurses. Through this programme, cancer nurses have the opportunity to spend five weeks in the United States learning the role of the research nurse in caring for patients in clinical trials. By working closely with oncology nurse-preceptors at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center and other associated centres, the nurses learn the components of clinical trial management—including the roles and responsibilities of team members—and focus on a team approach to managing clinical trials.

This programme, sponsored by the Health Research Board and the Health

and Social Care Research and Development Division, is made possible through a partnership between NCI and Georgetown University Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Oncology nurses from Ireland and Northern Ireland who work in hospitals funded for cancer clinical trials and who have an interest in learning more about clinical trial management and nursing practise are encouraged to apply for this programme.

## CLINICAL TRIALS E-LEARNING MODULE FOR NURSES

*"Having nurses from both Ireland and Northern Ireland really adds to the depth of the online learning experience. For example, online discussion regarding topics such as research ethics, governance procedures, and the role of the research nurse are greatly enhanced by having two different systems in place, whether that be in relation to regulations or healthcare provision."*

Valerie Holmes, Ph.D.  
Clinical Trials E-Learning Module  
Coordinator, School of Nursing &  
Midwifery, Queen's University Belfast

One of the primary objectives of the Consortium's Nursing Working Group is to identify formal educational opportunities for clinical trial nurses on the island of Ireland. To this end, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety commissioned Queen's University Belfast to develop an e-learning module to advance the skills, knowledge, and training of clinical research nurses.

The module includes 12 weekly sessions, a majority of which are taught online, with the exception of two face-to-face sessions held at Queen's University Belfast.

Module content includes clinical trials and hierarchy of evidence; critical appraisal of clinical trials quality of life assessment and clinical trials measures; ethical issues in clinical trials; consumer perspectives; research governance; clinical trial management; pharmacotherapeutics; data interpretation; and research career development information.

Since January 2007, this module has provided more than 46 clinical research nurses with an easily accessible online training to promote learning and exchange of practises across the island of Ireland. In 2010, six nurses (five from Northern Ireland and one from Ireland) participated in the programme.

## 2010 Highlight > Skill Building Through the NCI CTT

In spring 2010, two nurses from Northern Ireland—Barbara Harvey and Tracey Burns—participated in the NCI Clinical Trials Training for Nurses. Following the programme, Ms. Harvey gave a presentation on her experience at NCI to fellow trials nurses and undergraduate students working in clinical trials. She also participated in cancer services development through the Urology Northern Ireland Cancer Network Group, which is comprised of patients, community healthcare workers, urologists, and oncologists.

"I am using the skills I learned through the CTT to help facilitate a drug trial for renal cell cancers and a multi-arm drug trial for prostate cancer patients at Belfast Health and Social Care Trust," said Harvey.

## HEALTH ECONOMICS FELLOWSHIPS IN CANCER

The Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute (NCI) Cancer Consortium aims to create a research environment on the island of Ireland that will lead to improvements in the quality of healthcare, specifically in regards to cancer. To this end, the Consortium has developed a range of educational exchange programmes, including the Health Economics Fellowship, to attract postgraduates of the highest quality into cancer health research.

The four-year fellowship programme is funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) of Ireland, the Health and Social Care Research and Development (HSC R&D) Division of Northern Ireland, and the National Cancer Institute (NCI). The programme leads to a Ph.D. degree in health economics and encourages successful participants to pursue careers in this field on the island of Ireland.

As part of the 2010 Consortium activities, the HRB and HSC R&D awarded fellowships to two

applicants who began the first year of their fellowships in June.

The Health Economics Fellowship includes 10 months of coursework in health economics, cancer prevention, and health policy—based mainly in Ireland and Northern Ireland. This is followed by two years of mentored research, typically with an NCI-selected mentor, and a final year of mentored research at an affiliated host institution in Ireland or Northern Ireland. Six scholars are currently enrolled in this fellowship, with two scheduled to finish their programme in 2012.

### *2010 Highlight > Creating the Health Economics Picture, One Piece at a Time*

The study and practice of health economics focuses on the availability and allocation of healthcare resources and is becoming an increasingly important area for cancer control. Taken together, the work of health economics scholars and mentors sheds light on how cancer can be better prevented and managed in a cost-efficient manner on the island of Ireland—insight that may be useful from an international perspective as well.

An example is first-year fellow Brendan Walsh (2010-2014) from the National University of Ireland (NUI), Galway, who is looking at cancer screening and the economic rationale and principle reasoning underpinning an individual's decision to participate in cancer screening with regard to demographic and socio-economic groups, particularly in Ireland. In October, he presented research on the effect of socio-economics on the uptake of cancer screening at the *All-Ireland Conference on Population-based Cancer Research* in Dublin.

Another 2010 first-year fellow, Mary Dallat, M.D. (2010-2014), of the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland, will be modelling simulated costs and benefits of physical activity interventions. Dr. Dallat is taking time away from her public health training to focus on health economics and plans to continue this exploration of health economics after returning to her public health programme.



Brendan Walsh



Dr. Mary Dallat



#### **Left Image:**

Ms. Sally Campalani of Belfast City Hospital with NCI representatives Dr. Joe Harford, Ms. Isabel Otero, and Dr. Martin Brown at the Health Economics Conference in Belfast.



## 2010 Highlight > Health Economics Fellowship: Mutual Benefits for Scholars and Mentors

Participating in the Health Economics Fellowship (HEF) provides benefits to both the participating scholars and the mentors who guide the fellows during their two years of research in the United States and on the island of Ireland. For scholars, it is an opportunity to earn a Ph.D. while gaining global insight into health economics. For mentors, it's a chance to support top-notch Ph.D. candidates.

"The HEF program enables me to work on innovative problems in the evaluation of cancer screening. This can be of importance for Ireland as well as internationally," says mentor Dik Habbema, Ph.D., Erasmus MC, University Medical Center, Rotterdam. For him, the best part of the experience is "working with excellent Ph.D. students on important cancer prevention problems."

Mentors value the important role they play in encouraging this vital research. For Ciaran O'Neill, NUI Galway, the programme "has allowed me to focus attention on specific areas of research, facilitating the conduct of that work by providing a sounding board for ideas and confidence to pursue them."

In turn, the scholars recognise the unique opportunity they have in accessing such well-respected researchers. Says Diarmuid Coughlin (HEF Fellow, 2009-2013), "The Consortium Scholars programme has afforded me the opportunity to develop as a researcher, network effectively, and collaborate with highly skilled academics."

Diarmuid's mentor, Dr. Kevin Frick, Professor at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, is interested in health services research related to cancer treatment in general and cancer survivor quality of care in particular, and received an NCI R01 grant to further his studies in July 2010.

## JOINT RESEARCH PROJECTS IN CANCER

The Joint Research Projects in Cancer (JRPC) programme aims to develop strong and sustainable relationships between cancer researchers and research institutions on the island of Ireland and in the United States, supporting collaborative research to further the quality of cancer care on the island of Ireland.

Principal investigators (PIs) are awarded a three-year grant from the Health Research Board and the Health and Social Care Research and Development Division. The PI partners with another researcher in a different jurisdiction (United States or the island of Ireland) and selects a postgraduate fellow from Ireland, Northern Ireland, or the United States to spend at least one year conducting research

under the supervision of the principal investigator in each jurisdiction. In 2010, the HRB and the HSC R&D continued to fund five JRPC projects, including ten PIs and five fellows from Ireland and Northern Ireland. The JRPC transatlantic collaborations may focus on research topics such as clinical sciences, translational and public health research, epidemiology, and health service and practise-based research.

## 2010 Highlight > JRPC Mesothelioma Project Succeeds in Building International Collaborations

In 2010, Dr. Dean Fennell, a leading lung cancer specialist at the Centre for Cancer Research & Cell Biology at Queen's University Belfast (QUB), continued his research collaborations with the University of California, San Francisco on the molecular mechanisms underlying sensitivity and resistance to the 20S proteasome inhibitor bortezomib in mesothelioma.

This collaboration, made possible by an award from the Joint Research Projects in Cancer, has resulted in more funding for Dr. Fennell outside of the JRCP and led to a collaborative submission to the NIH Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPORE) with UCSF, Harvard Medical School, and the University of Chicago. By pooling resources and expertise, Dr. Fennell and his collaborators have made advances in their research and acquired additional funding to better understand mesothelioma drug resistance. In 2010, Dr. Fennell recruited Dr. Sara Busacca—a postgraduate fellow from Northern Ireland—to his lab as part of the JRPC Fellowship award.



Dr. Dean Fennell



## NCI SUMMER CURRICULUM IN CANCER PREVENTION

The U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI) partners with Ireland and Northern Ireland to provide healthcare professionals from the island of Ireland with cancer prevention training in the United States. Programme participants represent a variety of disciplines and are selected from international cancer centres, universities, health departments, industry, and government.

Two courses for healthcare professionals are offered during the Summer

Curriculum: a four-week course focused on the principles and practise of cancer prevention and control, and a one-week course on molecular prevention. These courses take place in Rockville, Maryland, and feature faculty members from throughout the U.S. National Institutes of Health and other academic institutions.

Since 2001, 270 scholars from the island of Ireland have participated in one or both of the courses—with a total of 16 scholars participating in 2010.

Through the All-Ireland NCI Cancer Consortium, the Health Research Board (HRB) of Ireland, and the Health and Social Care Research and Development (HSC R&D) Division of the Public Health Agency of Northern Ireland provide financial support for fellows from their jurisdiction.

More information about the Summer Curriculum can be found at: [www3.cancer.gov/prevention/pob/courses/index.html](http://www3.cancer.gov/prevention/pob/courses/index.html).

**Table 3: 2010 Summer Curriculum Participants**

Principles of Cancer Prevention and Control (Four-week Course)	Molecular Prevention (One-week Course)
Maeve Cusack ( <i>National Cancer Screening Service</i> )	Kah-Hoong Chang ( <i>National University of Ireland, Galway</i> )
Mary Dallat ( <i>Queen's University Belfast</i> )	Paula Cunnea ( <i>Queen's University Belfast</i> )
Catherin Duffy ( <i>National Cancer Control Programme</i> )	Claire Donohoe ( <i>Trinity College Dublin</i> )
Catherine Lynch ( <i>Department of Health &amp; Children</i> )	Nuala Healy ( <i>National University of Ireland, Galway</i> )
Miriam Owens ( <i>Health Research Board</i> )	Lynn Martin ( <i>St James's Hospital</i> )
Lesley Tilson ( <i>St. James's Hospital</i> )	Sarah McGarigle ( <i>Trinity College Dublin</i> )
Brendan Walsh ( <i>National University of Ireland, Galway</i> )	Michael Moran ( <i>Queen's University Belfast</i> )
	Britta Stordal ( <i>Dublin City University</i> )
	Claire Walsh ( <i>Royal College of Surgeons</i> )
*There were 16 total participants in 2010; three from Northern Ireland and 13 from Ireland	



**Left Image:**

Dr. Joe Harford, Ms. Isabel Otero, and Dr. Jessica Faupel Badger (NCI) with a group of 2010 Summer Curriculum AICC participants outside of NCI in Bethesda, MD.

## 2010 Highlight > An International Perspective on Cancer Prevention

During this year's Principles and Practice of Cancer Prevention and Control course, participants from Ireland and Northern Ireland joined with scholars from around the world to discuss international approaches to cancer prevention. During *Cancer Prevention: An International Perspective* on 15-16 July, participants from 32 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America gave presentations on cancer prevention efforts in their home countries.

The presentations were followed by discussions on public health issues, with a focus on cancer, and the challenges in implementing cancer prevention and control strategies in developing countries. Dr. Harford, Director of the NCI Office of International Affairs (OIA) spoke to the participants about NCI's grants and international work. Ms. Isabel V. Otero, International Program Director at the NCI OIA, spoke to the AICC participants about the goals and mission of the Consortium. A networking reception was organized for all international participants.

*"The international session gave me an understanding that people are grappling with some of the same issues in different countries. Some of the work we are doing may be relevant to the developing countries and we would be delighted to share it with them."*

*Ms. Catherine Duffy, MA, MBA, 2010 Principles and Practices of Cancer Prevention and Control course scholar and Primary Care Specialist, National Cancer Control Programme*

## NCI CANCER PREVENTION FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Through the Consortium, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has partnered with Ireland and Northern Ireland to develop clinical and research capacity for cancer prevention on the island of Ireland. As part of this effort, the Office of International Affairs (OIA) at NCI collaborates with the Health Research Board (HRB), the Health and Social Care Research and Development (HSC R&D) Division, and the NCI Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program (CPFP) to award fellowships to the CPFP.

The programme provides the opportunity to obtain a Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) degree in Ireland or Northern Ireland in year one, followed by three years of mentored research in the NCI's Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program in Bethesda, Maryland. Fellows may apply for a fifth year of research funding to facilitate their return to Ireland or Northern Ireland to set up independent research in collaboration with an established mentor on the island of Ireland.

Seven scholars have participated in this programme since it began in 2002.

In 2010, Paula Hyland Ph.D., M.P.H., (CPFP Scholar, 2008-2013) from the Centre for Cancer Research & Cell Biology, Queens University Belfast continued her work at the Genetic Epidemiology Branch at the NCI where she is investigating the molecular epidemiology of upper gastrointestinal (UGI) cancers.

For more information about this programme, please visit <http://www3.cancer.gov/prevention/pob/>.



*“It’s quite fitting that I bring my skills back to Ireland to continue my prostate cancer research.”*

*Dr. Sharon Glynn, CPFP Scholar  
2005-2009*



Sharon Glynn Ph.D., M.P.H., presents her research at the Redox Biology in Immunology and Cancer Workshop hosted by the NCI Center for Cancer Research.

### *2010 Highlight* > Maintaining Transatlantic Exchange

The global exchange of knowledge is a major goal for the Consortium. Sharon Glynn Ph.D., M.P.H., (CPFP scholar 2005-2009), exemplifies that goal with her return to Ireland in 2010 as a principal investigator, establishing a prostate cancer research group at the National University of Ireland, Galway. Dr. Glynn plans to work closely with colleagues at NCI and University Hospital Galway.

In November, *The Journal of Clinical Investigation* published research by Dr. Glynn, *et. al.* titled “Increased NOS2 predicts poor survival in estrogen receptor–negative breast cancer patients.” In the same month, she travelled back to NCI to present on “Converging inflammatory pathways in ER negative breast cancer progression” during the Redox Biology in Immunology and Cancer Workshop hosted by the NCI Center for Cancer Research.

Her team in Galway will conduct clinical and basic research to inform prostate cancer risk and progression, and develop therapeutics to combat recurrence and prevent cancer in high risk persons.

### STAYING CONNECTED TO THE AICC

Once a scholar has completed his or her fellowship or training programme, the Consortium encourages participants to take this new knowledge back to the island of Ireland to improve cancer research, prevention, and care. Here are some recommendations for staying engaged with the Consortium and building long-lasting all-Ireland and NCI connections after formal training has concluded.

1. **Visit the AICC website:** Visit [www.allirelandnci.com](http://www.allirelandnci.com) for updates on Consortium activities, news, and ways to engage.
2. **Participate in the AICC working groups:** Contact the AICC Help Desk at [consortium@cancer.gov](mailto:consortium@cancer.gov) to learn more about ongoing activities.
3. **Participate in conferences and meetings:** Attend cancer research conferences and meetings on the island of Ireland and in the United States to connect with fellow researchers and share knowledge. The Consortium would also love to hear from scholars and mentors who are speaking at or participating in conferences.
4. **Share your successes:** Send the Consortium updates on your research activities, awards, and presentations for inclusion on the website, in upcoming newsletters and Annual Activities Reports, etc.
5. **Sign-up for updates:** Sign-up to receive the AICC newsletter and other announcements, as well as update your contact information by contacting [consortium@cancer.gov](mailto:consortium@cancer.gov).



# Partners



## Department of Health and Children *Ireland*

The Department of Health and Children (DoHC) supports the Minister for Health and Children in the formulation and evaluation of policies for the health services. In conjunction with the Health Service Executive (HSE) and other interested parties, the Department also has a role in the strategic planning of health services.

The goals of the HSE's National Cancer Control Programme, established in 2007, are to improve cancer prevention, detection, treatment, and survival through a national service based on evidence and best practise. Under the Programme, there are four Managed Cancer Control Networks, with two cancer centres within each Network serving a minimum population of 500,000. Ultimately, all cancer diagnostic and surgical services will be provided within these eight centres and a satellite centre in Letterkenny.

The DoHC also supports the National Cancer Registry, Ireland (NCRI), which collects high-quality information on cancer and promotes the use of this information in reducing cancer incidence and improving survival. The Registry also provides essential input to the formation, implementation, and monitoring of data relating to clinical activities and outcomes under the National Cancer Control Programme. The current Minister for Health and Children is Ms. Mary Harney, T.D.

Further information can be found at [www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie).



## Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety *Northern Ireland*

The mission of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) is to improve the health and social well-being of all people in Northern Ireland by ensuring appropriate health and social care services in both the community and clinical settings, such as hospitals and general practise. The DHSSPS also supports health improvement programmes that are designed to secure improvement in health and social well-being and reduce health inequalities.

In 2005, DHSSPS established the Northern Ireland Cancer Network (NICaN) to promote equal access to high-quality, patient-focused, and clinically-effective cancer care. NICaN supports professionals, patients, and volunteers in working together to achieve these goals.

Several professional groups serve as advisors to DHSSPS administration and the Medical and Nursing Groups are represented in the Consortium's membership. The current Minister for DHSSPS for Northern Ireland, Michael McGimpsey, was appointed in May 2007.

Further information can be found at [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk).





## National Cancer Institute *United States*

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which is one of 11 agencies that compose the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The NCI, established under the National Cancer Institute Act of 1937, is the federal government's principal agency for cancer research and training.

The NCI coordinates the National Cancer Program, which conducts and supports research, training, health information dissemination, and other programmes with respect to the cause, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of cancer, rehabilitation from cancer, and the continuing care of cancer patients and their families.

Kathleen Sebelius was sworn in as the Secretary of the HHS on 28 April 2009. Dr. Francis S. Collins became Director of the NIH on 7 August 2009, and Dr. Harold Varmus became the Director of the NCI on 12 July 2010.

Further information can be found at [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov).

## Office of International Affairs *United States*



The NCI Office of International Affairs (OIA) is the focal point for execution of many (though not all) of the Institute's international outreach programmes, which are pursuant to these mandates. Specifically, OIA is charged with:

- Coordinating, planning, management, and evaluation of the international research, control, and information activities of the National Cancer Program
- Serving as the NCI focal point with the Fogarty International Center, the Office of Global Health Affairs of the Department of Health and Human Services, the State Department, and other federal organizations involved in international health activities
- Coordinating cancer activities under formal and informal collaborative agreements between the United States and other countries
- Planning and implementing programmes for the international exchange of scientists
- Liaising with international agencies involved in the National Cancer Program

Further information can be found at <http://oia.cancer.gov>.



## Health Research Board *Ireland*

The mission of the Health Research Board (HRB) is to improve people's health, patient care, and health service delivery by:

- Leading and supporting excellent research by outstanding people within a coherent health research system;
- Generating knowledge and promoting its application in policy and practise; and, in doing so, play a key role in health system innovation and economic development.

In conjunction with Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care Research and Development (HSC R&D) Division, the HRB is responsible for funding many Consortium programmes, including the clinical trials network and scholar exchange programmes.

The HRB has invested more than €50 million in cancer research since 2005 and is focused on long-term strategies such as developing infrastructure and building capacity in cancer research across a variety of disciplines. This funding strategy encompasses two goals:

- Driving the development of excellent clinical research, including applied biomedical research, within a coherent health research system
- Building capacity to conduct high-quality population health science and health services research

These goals align well with the objectives of the Consortium, and the HRB works closely with partners in Ireland, the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States to achieve its goals.

Further information can be found at [www.hrb.ie](http://www.hrb.ie).



## Health and Social Care Research and Development Division *Northern Ireland*

The Health and Social Care Research and Development (HSC R&D) Division of the Public Health Agency works to encourage and support HSC research throughout Northern Ireland. The move of the former HSC R&D Office to the new Public Health Agency has not changed its remit and the HSC R&D Division continues to provide a wide range of support for research across all sectors of health and social care, and for all professions engaged in clinical research.

The HSC R&D Division continues to work with a variety of partner organisations to help bridge professional, organisational, sectoral, and geographic boundaries and help develop Northern Ireland as a national and international centre for research and development in health and social care.

Further information can be found at [www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net).



**LEADERSHIP**

# *Spotlights*





## *Dr. Tony Holohan*

*Chief Medical Officer  
Department of Health  
and Children  
Ireland*

Dr. Tony Holohan has worked throughout his career on policy development in areas such as cancer control, prevention, primary care, health information, and health technology assessment. He was appointed as Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Health and Children (DoHC) of Ireland in December 2008. His main responsibilities in this role are to provide medical evidence, analysis, and advice to the Minister and other members of the DoHC; lead and manage the Department's medical officers team; work with professional groups and other relevant stakeholders; and lead on patient safety issues, emergency planning, and other public health matters.

Dr. Holohan has also worked on the National Cancer Control Strategy as a member of the National Cancer Forum and is a member of the National Cancer Registry Board and the Health Research Board. He has been a member of the Board of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine.

Dr. Holohan joined the DoHC as Deputy Chief Medical Officer in 2001. He is a medical graduate of University College Dublin.



## *Dr. Michael McBride*

*Chair, Board of Directors, 2010  
Chief Medical Officer  
Department of Health, Social  
Services and Public Safety  
Northern Ireland*

Dr. Michael McBride has more than 15 years of health service management experience. He has been Chief Medical Officer of Northern Ireland since 2006, where he is responsible for medical and environmental advice to ministers, the DHHSPS, and other departments in the U.K.; some public health policy issues, such as health promotion and disease prevention; and safety and quality policy issues, including standards and guidelines, professional regulation, and adverse incident reporting and learning.

Before becoming CMO, he had been Medical Director at the Royal Hospitals and contributed to strategic change at the trust, regional, and national levels in the areas of clinical and social care governance.

In 2000 Dr. McBride was named Director of Education in the Royal Hospitals, after a term as Postgraduate Clinical Tutor in the Royal Hospitals from 1996 to 2000. He joined the Health Service in 1994 when he was appointed Consultant Physician in HIV medicine at the Royal Hospitals.



## *Dr. Harold Varmus*

*Director  
National Cancer Institute  
United States*

Harold Varmus, a pioneer in cancer research, was appointed director of the National Cancer Institute in 2010 by President Barack Obama and serves as the United States (U.S.) member of the All-Ireland NCI Cancer Consortium (AICC) Board of Directors.

As former director of the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), Dr. Varmus was one of five leaders who represented the United States during the signing of the first Memorandum of Understanding that established the AICC. In his previous role as co-chair of the recent Institute of Medicine report on the U.S. role in global health, Dr. Varmus advocated for nearly doubling the United States' financial support for global health. He has also chaired the Global Health Advisory Committee at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and was a co-chair of President Obama's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.

Dr. Varmus began his scientific training as a Public Health Service officer at NIH and later served as NIH Director and President and Chief Executive Officer of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Dr. Varmus is co-recipient of the 1989 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for studies of the genetic basis of cancer.



### *Mr. Enda Connolly*

*Chief Executive, Health Research Board  
Ireland*

As chief executive of the Health Research Board (HRB), Mr. Connolly is responsible for guiding the HRB's mission to improve healthcare through funding and disseminating research. In increasing health services capacity and creating an environment for innovation, better services, and improved patient care, he hopes to attract healthcare industry to Ireland, with benefit of developing the economy.

Prior to joining the HRB in 2008, Mr. Connolly spent more than 30 years in IDA Ireland where he had a pivotal role in leading change, developing strategy, building stakeholder confidence, and securing significant foreign direct investment.



### *Professor Bernadette Hannigan*

*Director of R&D and Chief Scientific Advisor, Health and Social Care  
Research and Development, Public Health Agency  
Northern Ireland*

Professor Bernadette Hannigan is director of R&D and chief scientific advisor at the Public Health Agency's Health and Social Care Research & Development Division, the government body responsible for the promotion, coordination, and support of health and social research. Previously she was Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation) at the University of Ulster where she was responsible for ensuring the quality of research carried out across all disciplines in the University, for the commercial development of research findings and for maintaining relationships between the University and business. Bernie continues as Professor of Immunology at Ulster.



### *Dr. Joe Harford*

*Chair of Strategic Advisory Board, Director, Office of International  
Affairs, National Cancer Institute  
United States*

As SAG Chair and Director of the Office of International Affairs at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), Dr. Joe B. Harford is responsible for coordinating liaisons between NCI and cancer research institutions abroad. He joined NCI in 1996 as the Associate Director and Chief of Staff of the Office of the Director. Prior to that, Dr. Harford was the chief scientist at RiboGene, Inc., a biotechnology company, and previously spent fourteen years as a scientist at NIH. Dr. Harford received a Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of Maryland Medical School and is a founding editor of *Current Protocols in Cell Biology*.



### *Ms. Isabel V. Otero, M.P.H.*

*Consortium Program Director, International Program Officer,  
Office of International Affairs, National Cancer Institute  
United States*

Ms. Isabel V. Otero is Program Director for the Consortium and is responsible for managing AICC activities, including administration, communications, and engagement. She is an International Program Officer for the NCI Office of International Affairs and, under this capacity, serves as liaison to various cancer organizations, both in the U.S. and abroad. Prior to that Ms. Otero was an Emerging Leader for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and research fellow at the National Institutes for Child Health and Human Development. Ms. Otero received an M.P.H. from John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and an undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia. She sits on various boards, including the NIH Friends of the Clinical Center.

## Board of Directors

<b>Dr. Michael McBride</b> (Chair 2010) <i>Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Northern Ireland)</i>	<b>Dr. Tony Holohan</b> <i>Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health and Children (Ireland)</i>	<b>Dr. Harold Varmus</b> <i>Director, National Cancer Institute (United States)</i>
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## Consortium Program Director

<b>Ms. Isabel V. Otero, M.P.H.</b> <i>International Program Officer, Office of International Affairs, National Cancer Institute (Bethesda)</i>
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## Strategic Advisory Group

### Representatives of Participating Jurisdictions

<b>Dr. Joe B. Harford</b> (Chair) <i>Director, Office of International Affairs, National Cancer Institute (Bethesda)</i>	<b>Mr. Enda Connolly</b> <i>Chief Executive, Health Research Board (Dublin)</i>	<b>Professor Bernadette Hannigan</b> <i>Director of R&amp;D and Chief Scientific Advisor, Health and Social Care Research and Development, Public Health Agency (Belfast)</i>
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### Working Group Chairs

<b>Cancer Registries and Epidemiology</b> <b>Dr. Harry Comber</b> <i>Director, National Cancer Registry Ireland (Cork)</i>	<b>Nursing</b> <b>Mr. Martin Bradley</b> <i>Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Belfast)</i>
<b>Clinical Trials</b> <b>Dr. Anne Cody</b> <i>Head of Research Infrastructure and Special Initiatives Unit, Health Research Board (Dublin)</i>	<b>Prevention</b> <b>Dr. Fenton Howell</b> <i>Director of Public Health, HSE Population Health Directorate (Navan)</i>
<b>Information Technology</b> <b>Professor Donal Hollywood</b> <i>Marie Curie Professor of Clinical Oncology, Head of the Academic Unit of Clinical and Molecular Oncology, Trinity College Dublin (Dublin)</i>	<b>Scholar Exchange and Training</b> <b>Professor Mark Lawler</b> <i>Associate Professor of Experimental Haematology/Oncology, Trinity College Dublin (Dublin)</i>

### Other Strategic Advisory Group Members

<b>Professor Charles Campbell</b> <i>Professor of Surgery, Queen's University Belfast (Belfast)</i>	<b>Professor Michael Kerin</b> <i>Professor/Head of the Department of Surgery, National University of Ireland (Galway)</i>
<b>Dr. Anna Gavin</b> <i>Director, Northern Ireland Cancer Registry (Belfast)</i>	<b>Professor Dennis McCance</b> <i>Director, Centre for Cancer Research &amp; Cell Biology, Queen's University Belfast (Belfast)</i>
<b>Dr. Lee J. Helman</b> <i>Scientific Director for Clinical Research, Center for Cancer Research, National Cancer Institute (Bethesda)</i>	<b>Ms. Sheila O'Malley</b> <i>Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health and Children (Dublin)</i>
<b>Dr. Mary Hynes</b> <i>Cancer Network Manager, West, National Cancer Control Programme (Dublin)</i>	<b>Dr. David Waugh</b> <i>Reader of Molecular Oncology, Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology, Queen's University Belfast (Belfast)</i>
<b>Professor Richard Kaplan</b> <i>Associate Director, National Cancer Research Network (Leeds and London)</i>	<b>Dr. Richard Wilson</b> <i>Director, Northern Ireland Cancer Clinical Trials Unit, Belfast City Hospital (Belfast)</i>
<b>Professor Elaine Kay</b> <i>Consultant Histopathologist, The Royal College of Surgeons and Beaumont Hospital (Dublin)</i>	

### Palliative Care Liaison

<b>Professor Philip Larkin</b> <i>Professor of Clinical Nursing [Palliative Care], School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, Health Sciences Centre, University College Dublin (Dublin)</i>
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# Funding of Consortium Initiatives

The Consortium is focused on endeavours that encompass all aspects of cancer control and its members work collectively to fund initiatives to make a broad impact. This cooperation enables improved scientific programmes in each jurisdiction in the following areas:

- Research (including biobanking)
- Diagnosis and treatment
- Palliative care and survivorship
- Cancer policy analysis and health economics
- Education and training for physicians, nurses, and scientists
- Epidemiology (including registry and surveillance)
- Prevention and early detection
- Interactions aimed at enhanced public health and patient care
- Quality assurance

Funded projects must be consistent with the policies and strategic cancer plans of the three jurisdictions and must exhibit potential for wider applicability within Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United States. Additionally, projects must enhance cancer care and research. Each partner directly funds its share of programmes established under the auspices of the Consortium. The tables below provide examples of initiatives funded by Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United States.

## 2010 Ireland (HRB) and Northern Ireland (HSC R&D Division) Funded Initiatives

<b>Scholar Exchange</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRB/HSC R&amp;D Division/NCI Health Economics Fellowships</li> <li>• NCI Cancer Prevention Fellowships</li> <li>• Joint Research Projects in Cancer Fellowships</li> <li>• Travel support, stipends, and other expenses for participants of scholar exchange programmes at the NCI, such as the Summer Curriculum in Cancer Prevention and the Nurse Leadership training</li> </ul>
<b>Clinical Trials Network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 hospitals to carry out a broad spectrum of clinical studies, as part of the All-Ireland Cooperative Oncology Research Group (ICORG), including a headquarters in Dublin and statistics and data management function in Belfast</li> </ul>
<b>Information Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TELESYNERGY® expansion to two remaining site locations in Ireland</li> </ul>
<b>Cancer Registries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports, projects, and other support to harmonise data systems to spur new research in epidemiology</li> </ul>

## 2010 United States (NCI) Funded Initiatives

<b>Scholar Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel support for U.S. scholars</li> <li>• Indirect funding related to training and workshops in the United States</li> <li>• Onsite management of U.S. visa and security clearance</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration of the Consortium's governance</li> <li>• Development and maintenance of Consortium extranet, database, and award-winning website</li> <li>• Production of Consortium communications, including Annual Activities Reports and Newsletters</li> </ul>

## Learn More

Communicating success and progress to the health professionals and general public of all three member jurisdictions is a high priority for the Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute Cancer Consortium.

To keep our community members informed, the Consortium uses a multipronged approach, including our website, newsletters, annual activities reports, help desk, and more. Through these channels, individuals and organisations can stay up-to-date on the latest news of the Consortium, including membership, funding opportunities, and cancer-related conferences and events.



### Award-winning Website

**[www.allirelandnci.org](http://www.allirelandnci.org)**

The website is the hub of Consortium communication and is updated regularly with information about Consortium-sponsored educational opportunities, fellowships, and funding for U.S. and island of Ireland oncologists, nurses, and researchers.



### Publications

**[www.allirelandnci.org/publications](http://www.allirelandnci.org/publications)**

The Consortium's newsletters and annual activities reports highlight our accomplishments as well as the activities, people, and events associated with the organisation. PDF versions of all issues and reports are available online in the Publications section of the Consortium website. Hard copies can also be requested.



### AICC Contact Information

Inquiries regarding Consortium programmes and activities or how an individual or organisation can get involved should be directed to Ms. Theresa Davis, Operations Coordinator, Office of International Affairs, National Cancer Institute at [consortium@cancer.gov](mailto:consortium@ cancer.gov) or 301-496-9475.

*This 2010 Annual Activities Report was prepared on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute Cancer Consortium and is distributed to the cancer research communities in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United States, as well as to individuals and institutions that share the Consortium's vision of implementing global cancer control through collaborative research and education. Throughout the document, UK-English spellings have been used unless a proper noun or improving clarity indicated otherwise.*



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